United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.18

General Assembly
Fifty-third

Official Records

First Committee
18th Meeting
Thursday, 29 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 79 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, dated 26 October 1998, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*".

We are pleased to announce that the draft resolution is sponsored by the following delegations: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and my own delegation.

It is clear from the debates at this session of the First Committee that a large majority of Members of the Organization continue to be seriously concerned about the lack of genuine effort and the extremely slow pace of negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Recent developments have increased those concerns and complicated the situation further. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community intensify efforts in nuclear disarmament with a view to realizing the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This draft resolution is one such effort in that direction. It is based on, and is largely an update of, General Assembly resolution 52/38 O, which the General Assembly adopted by a large majority at its last session. The rationales contained in last year's resolution remain as valid this year as they were then.

The draft resolution underscores once again, in paragraph 1, the unanimous advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that

> "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

It is clear from this opinion that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue such negotiations but also to bring them to an early conclusion.

The draft resolution also, in paragraph 2, reiterates the call by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/38 O for

> "all States to immediately fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations in 1999 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination".

98-86248 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

That is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States parties under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of those weapons.

The sponsors of the draft resolution consider this unanimous opinion of the World Court on the existence of this obligation as a clear basis for follow-up actions by Member States of the United Nations in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

In proposing the draft resolution at this fifty-third session of the General Assembly, I should also like to make a number of additional points, partly in response to comments made by those delegations which spoke against the relevant draft resolution on previous occasions. I should like to point out that while the draft resolution seeks to bring about the immediate commencement of multilateral negotiations — specifically in 1999 — leading to a nuclear weapons convention, its formulation does not exclude, and indeed allows for and encourages, negotiations on other aspects of nuclear disarmament, the entire process of which should lead to negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention. The draft resolution specifically mentions negotiations leading to a nuclear weapons convention, thereby allowing for the kinds of disarmament steps that the nuclear-weapon States themselves are committed to support.

It should be noted, as was noted last year by one delegation — to which I am grateful — that the draft resolution called for negotiations "leading to" and not "on" a nuclear weapons convention. The realistic approach taken by this draft resolution is therefore not incompatible with the step-by-step incremental approaches mooted by others, including the Non-Aligned Movement, and it should therefore be looked at with a positive and constructive attitude by the nuclear-weapon States.

My delegation readily admits that the draft resolution focuses that part of the opinion of the Court that pertains to the unanimous opinion on the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. It should be recalled that the ICJ gave two main conclusions on nuclear weapons, one relating to the issue of the threat or use of nuclear weapons and the other relating to the obligation to negotiate disarmament. It is quite appropriate for the General Assembly to treat these two conclusions separately, as they require different responses. As the draft resolution is entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion", we think that two opinions together in one draft resolution would only confuse the issue, as delegations may be able to support one appropriate course of action and not the other.

The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligation of States, because that conclusion was reached unanimously by the World Court, and there is little or no controversy over the meaning of this conclusion, unlike the conclusion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which has been subject to a number of interpretations. The implementation of this conclusion is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a number of mandates to promote disarmament negotiations.

To the point made last year by a few delegations that what was needed was further bilateral negotiations, and that multilateral negotiations could jeopardize the successful conclusion of bilateral negotiations, I can only repeat what my delegation stated when it presented last year's draft resolution. We said that we acknowledged

> "ongoing efforts and past achievements towards the reduction of nuclear arms through bilateral negotiations"

but added that these

> "bilateral negotiations address only the issue of the reduction in numbers of these weapons to a certain ceiling — not their total elimination or the changing of existing policies on the use or threat of use of these weapons" (*A/C.1/52/PV.16, p. 11*)

I should like to stress once again the importance and continued relevance of bilateral negotiations, but these should not detract from the importance of multilateral negotiations. Indeed, the two tracks could complement and reinforce each other. After all, nuclear disarmament is a matter of concern to all of humanity and not just the nuclear-weapon States.

There was also the contention that the draft resolution released the non-nuclear-weapon States from any disarmament responsibility. That is of course entirely unfounded and misleading, as the draft resolution calls upon all States to fulfil the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament. It does not single out the nuclear-weapon States only.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One delegation contended that the draft resolution removed the article VI obligation of the NPT in relation to general and complete disarmament, in response to which I wish to point out that the draft resolution before the Committee is on the implementation of the ICJ's advisory opinion and not on the NPT. While the NPT obligation in article VI comprised part of international law which was used by the Court, it also used other Government and customary law to determine its conclusion. The Court's conclusion that there is an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament did not mean any linkage between such an obligation and general and complete disarmament, nor does the NPT make a direct link. It merely states that there is an obligation to do both.

It was further contended that the draft resolution was silent on the fact that the Court concluded that there was not in international law a prohibition against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. My delegation is grateful to the observation made by one delegation last year, with which we entirely agree, that the Court did conclude that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was generally illegal and that it is incorrect to say that it allowed for an exception. The Court rejected the argument that there would be legal use of nuclear weapons, and said that it could not reach a conclusion on extreme circumstances.

For all those reasons, my delegation refutes the allegation made by those who have opposed the introduction of a similar draft resolution in the past that it is selective, contentious and unrealistic. It is none of these things. The submission of the draft resolution in its present form is merely a matter of practical applicability of the opinion of the Court in the context of the work of the First Committee and the General Assembly relating to disarmament. States which support multilateral negotiations that will eventually lead to the global elimination of nuclear weapons — as we are all committed to do — will have no reason to oppose this draft resolution, which seeks to do just that in the long term.

In introducing the draft resolution my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to its co-sponsors and to delegations that will vote in favour of it.

Mrs. Kunadi (India): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sudan, Viet Nam and India.

India and several other countries, many of them from the Non-Aligned Movement, have been proposing, through the draft resolution, negotiations on a legally binding prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to be concluded at an early date. Similar draft resolutions have received widespread support over the years, but we regret that no progress has been made on implementation. That has been due to the reluctance by certain States to allow the commencement of multilateral negotiations on the proposed convention.

The promise held out by the end of the cold war that with the reductions in political antagonisms there would be substantial progress towards the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons has been belied. The international situation continues to be characterized by a nuclearized global order wherein nuclear weapons are viewed by some as a legitimate currency of power and a select few claim the right to possess them in perpetuity. Nuclear doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States espouse the first use of nuclear weapons. The international community must take decisive steps to delegitimize nuclear weapons globally as an essential step leading to their elimination.

The historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, there already exists in humanitarian law a general prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction. We need to consider further steps that can build upon the historic advisory opinion. A legally binding instrument specifically prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is both pertinent and necessary to underwrite the existing provisions of international humanitarian law. There is a need to remove any ambiguity which may be resorted to in justifying the use of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 underlines the fact that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind; refers to the Court's advisory opinion that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, that of the principles and provisions of humanitarian law; and expresses the conviction that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would strengthen international security and contribute to the climate for negotiations leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear

weapons. The draft resolution reiterates the request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Such a convention against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would perhaps constitute the first genuine nuclear disarmament agreement.

We hope that this draft resolution will continue to secure the widespread support that similar draft resolutions have received in the past.

Ms. Eshmambetova (Kyrgyzstan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". The trend towards nuclear-weapon-free zones in recent years is evidence of the growing significance of regional movements in advancing the cause of global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba have made an important contribution to the non-proliferation regime while also representing a significant step towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

In this regard, I am particularly honoured to inform the Committee that in addition to the sponsors mentioned in document A/C.1/53/L.2 — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — the following delegations have also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Australia, Brazil, El Salvador, Mongolia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand. The support of these countries, representing various regional arrangements, is of special significance to the Central Asian countries which are currently engaged in the preparation of the legal groundwork for the nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

We are also grateful to our partners from the Commonwealth of Independent States, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine, and the delegations of Italy and Turkey, which have reiterated their strong commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by co-sponsoring our draft resolution.

The draft, based on last year's resolution, reflects recent developments, including the informal meetings and consultations organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York and Geneva and the Consultative Meeting of Experts of the Central Asian Countries, the Nuclear-Weapon States and the United Nations, hosted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek in July this year, which concluded with the adoption of a joint communiqué. It calls upon all Member States to support the Central Asian initiative aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, and commends their first concrete steps in preparing the legal groundwork for their initiative.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would further encourage the five Central Asia States to continue their dialogue with the five nuclear-weapon States, initiated in Bishkek; request the Secretary-General to provide assistance to them; and decide to consider the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

To conclude, I should like to stress my sincere gratitude for the support voiced in the First Committee by a large number of States for the proposed Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. In the light of these expressions of support, and informal consultations held with a number of delegations, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Nepal.

Except for the addition of a new preambular paragraph, this draft resolution is not basically different from last year's. In the new paragraph the idea of the creation of an educational and training programme for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for young people with different backgrounds, to be financed from voluntary contributions, is noted.

As previously, we have, among other things, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/323), in which he expresses his belief that the mandate of the Centre remains valid and that it can play a useful role in fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The draft resolution also commends the useful activities carried out by the Centre in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building, as well as the promotion of disarmament and security through the

organization of regional meetings, the process known as the "Kathmandu process".

In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution, as usual, would have the General Assembly reaffirm its strong support for the continued operation and further strengthening of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, and underscore the importance of the "Kathmandu process" as a powerful vehicle for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue. It also expresses appreciation for the continued political support and financial contributions to the Regional Centre so essential for its operation. In addition, the draft reiterates the appeal to Member States, in particular those within the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to continue to make voluntary contributions with a view to strengthening the programme of activities of the Centre.

The draft resolution contains requests to the Secretary-General to provide the necessary support, within existing resources, to the Regional Centre in carrying out its programme of activities; and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on its implementation.

It is the earnest hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. Its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly will be powerful support for the Centre as a useful forum for meetings for disarmament and peace and for security and confidence-building in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", of which the Philippines has just become a sponsor. Since my delegation spoke on a related issue a few days ago as part of its contribution to the thematic discussion, I shall be quite brief.

This draft resolution is a product of long, serious consultations and delicate negotiations, of which the fact that a revision has been issued this morning is an example. The draft resolution addresses Mongolia's declared nuclear-weapon-free policy, which enjoys widespread international support. The negotiations have shown that accepting that policy and following the formula of the operation of nuclear-weapon-free zones does not seem to be, at least at present, fully applicable when it comes to single States, especially with respect to a State situated between two nuclear-weapon States. However, this did not discourage us Mongolians or our negotiating partners.

As a result of the consultations and negotiations, we have come to the conclusion that for a small State geopolitically located like Mongolia, its nuclear-weapon-free status would be stronger and durable if its overall security were internationally recognized and guaranteed. That understanding is the basis of the concept of the draft resolution and, in fact, of the very approach to this question. My delegation believes that given such an understanding, and with the necessary political will, we could arrive quite soon at a concrete special arrangement that would accommodate the particular interests and needs of Mongolia, including the strengthening of its nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the legitimate interests of its neighbours and of stability in the region in general.

By the preambular part of the draft resolution the General Assembly would take note of the support that Mongolia's initiative already enjoys and the fact that a nuclear-weapon-free status is one means of ensuring the national security of States. By its operative part the General Assembly would welcome the declaration by Mongolia of its nuclear-weapon-free status, and endorse and support Mongolia's good-neighbourly and balanced relationship with its neighbours as an important element of strengthening regional peace, security and stability.

Operative paragraph 3 is, so to speak, the soul of the draft resolution. It proceeds from the notion that nuclear-weapon-free status is part of Mongolia's overall security and that therefore consolidation and strengthening of Mongolia's international security is a *sine qua non* for ensuring its nuclear-weapon-free status. Therefore, by operative paragraph 3 the General Assembly would invite all States concerned to cooperate with Mongolia in this respect.

Since the appropriate arrangements to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status are yet to be defined, the General Assembly would ask the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to provide the necessary assistance to Mongolia and report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

By operative paragraph 7 the Assembly would include the question in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session.

My delegation expresses the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which would reflect the spirit of the negotiations.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons".

The Government of Japan submitted a draft resolution under this title for the first time in 1994 to demonstrate the clear commitment of the international community to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was also intended to prepare favourable ground for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review and Extension Conference the following year.

The principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at that Conference in 1995 reflected this idea, referring exclusively to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons as the common goal of the international community. Since then successive resolutions have been adopted with the support of the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States, including, last year, all the nuclear-weapon States. We thus consider our initial aim of gaining the commitment of all States to the elimination of nuclear weapons to have been achieved. Against this background Japan would like to propose that we move a step forward and, to this end, is submitting a new draft resolution.

I would like simply to touch upon some of the new and more salient points of our draft resolution. The fifth and seventh preambular paragraphs would have the General Assembly welcome recent positive developments in the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, such as the accession by Brazil to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the decision of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to establish an ad hoc committee on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

By operative paragraphs 1 and 2 the General Assembly would reaffirm the importance of achieving both the universality and the full implementation of the NPT, reflecting the view of the Government of Japan that the NPT is the cornerstone of efforts towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

Operative paragraph 4 describes several concrete and realistic actions which should be pursued both multilaterally and among the nuclear-weapon States immediately or in the near future. This reflects the Japanese Government's long-standing view that the best way to promote nuclear disarmament is the step-by-step approach, adopting concrete and realistic measures wherever possible.

The three multilateral measures mentioned in paragraph 4 are: the early signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and the commencement of multilateral discussions on possible steps to follow the fissile material cut-off treaty.

In addition, the same paragraph refers to three measures which should be pursued by the nuclear-weapon States. They are: the advancement of the START process; unilateral measures for the reduction of nuclear arsenals; and the commencement, at an appropriate stage, of negotiations on the reduction of nuclear weapons among the five nuclear-weapon States.

In operative paragraph 7 the General Assembly would call upon all States to redouble their efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

This year has witnessed both positive and negative developments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and in future may be remembered as a critical year for that reason. The Government of Japan strongly believes that the international community should not succumb to inertia, but should press ahead further in consolidating its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It also believes that, while acknowledging divergent views on how to reach the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, we must find common ground if we are to move forward. The text before us was drafted with a view to bridging the gaps between those different views.

Japan hopes that its views are shared by all United Nations Member States and that an overwhelming majority of them will support this draft resolution.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44, on the maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States, on behalf of the delegations of Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Republic of Macedonia.

Let me first inform the Committee of a slight change to the seventh preambular paragraph, which should now read:

> "*Convinced* of the necessity to enhance the overall conflict prevention and resolution capability of the United Nations system to prevent the outbreak of conflicts".

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 would be the second resolution of the General Assembly to address the subject of the violent disintegration of States. The first time the Committee addressed the subject was two years ago, when the General Assembly, on the Committee's recommendation, adopted resolution 51/55 of 10 December 1996.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 addresses one of the most important aspects of the maintenance of international security, the prevention of the violent disintegration of States. It addresses the subject in a forward-looking and determined way. The emergence of new opportunities for building a peaceful world, according to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44, can be realized only by observance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 expresses deep concern that at present, situations which may threaten international peace and security persist in spite of the efforts of the United Nations — to put an end to them — and to prevent the occurrence of such situations in the future, and stresses the necessity to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to prevent the outbreak of conflicts.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 stresses the importance of the activities of international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, aimed at preventing the violent disintegration of States, maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation for development.

Further, A/C.1/53/L.44 considers that the violent disintegration of States is a threat to international peace and security. Noting that the vast majority of violent conflicts at present are conflicts within States, it affirms the need for United Nations measures to help prevent the violent disintegration of States, thereby enhancing the maintenance of international peace and security and the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

In its operative part, A/C.1/53/L.44 calls upon all States, the relevant international organizations and competent organs of the United Nations to continue to undertake measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations as appropriate to eliminate threats to international peace and security and to help prevent conflicts which can lead to the violent disintegration of States. It stresses the importance of good-neighbourliness and the development of friendly relations among States to the solution of problems among States, to prevent the violent disintegration of States and to promote international cooperation in accordance with the Charter.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 also calls upon all States to solve their disputes with other States by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter.

In operative paragraphs 4 and 5, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 affirms the need for strict compliance with the principle of the inviolability of international borders and the principle of the territorial integrity of any State. In operative paragraph 6 it stresses the importance of regional efforts aimed at preventing bilateral conflicts endangering the maintenance of international peace and security.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 ends with the request addressed to all States and the relevant international organizations to continue to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States; and with the recommendation that the General Assembly decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session an item entitled "The maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States".

As can be seen, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 addresses a problem of great concern in the present international political situation. We can say with great

certainty that in the future our Organization will be preoccupied with prevention. The eruption of new conflicts must be prevented and ongoing ones must be resolved. That will contribute immensely to the improvement of the international political situation and international cooperation as well as the maintenance of international peace and security. The goal, therefore, of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 is undertaking measures and policies at the national, regional and global levels aimed at eliminating threats to international peace and security and the enhancement of international cooperation in that endeavour.

Finally, may I say that the preparation of a draft resolution in this Committee with the aim of its being adopted without a vote is not easy and is a complex affair. We have tried very hard to submit to the Committee a draft that will command the approval of all delegations. We hope that A/C.1/53/L.44 will be adopted without a vote.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee that this morning I had the great honour, on behalf of my country, to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1.

Mr. Toth (Hungary): It is my privilege to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, on the Biological Weapons Convention. The sponsors are Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

In its preambular part draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 notes with satisfaction that there are 140 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It calls upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conferences, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference.

The draft resolution recalls the provisions of the Convention relating to scientific and technological cooperation and the related provisions of the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, the final report of the 1994 Special Conference and the final documents of the Review Conferences.

It welcomes the reaffirmation made by the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of biological weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

The draft resolution recalls further the decision of the 1994 Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which established an ad hoc group open to States parties whose objective should be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 recalls the Final Document of the Durban Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, in which the heads of State or Government noted the progress achieved so far in negotiating a protocol, stressed the importance of achieving further substantive progress for the conclusion of a universally acceptable and legally binding instrument designed to strengthen the Convention and reaffirmed the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the conclusion of the negotiations by the Ad Hoc Group as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference.

The draft resolution further recalls the Declaration of the informal Ministerial Meeting held recently in New York, in which the participants and the sponsors affirmed their strong support for the Convention and for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention.

In its operative part, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 welcomes the progress achieved so far in negotiating a protocol to strengthen the Convention and reaffirms the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the Ad Hoc Group to conclude negotiations as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review

Conference and to submit its report to the States parties for consideration at a Special Conference and for adoption by consensus.

The draft resolution calls upon all States parties, in this context, to accelerate the negotiations and to redouble their efforts within the Ad Hoc Group to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical regime and seek early resolution of the outstanding issues through renewed flexibility in order to complete the protocol on the basis of consensus at the earliest possible date.

Finally, draft resolution A/53/C.1/L.6/Rev.1 calls upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and also calls upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

May I express my hope that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 will receive the same consensus support as similar resolutions received in previous years.

Mrs. Besker (Croatia): I should like to address conventional weapons cluster issues, specifically, agenda items 71 (d) and 75 dealing with the landmine problem and the related draft resolutions, one of which has already been introduced in the Committee.

Croatia is one of the world's eight most mine-plagued States, and therefore the landmine problem is one of primary concern for my Government. The issue is a standing topic in all our meetings with friends and partners, in particular the European Union countries and United Nations Secretariat representatives. As is the case in all mine-affected countries, the landmine problem adversely affects efforts towards reconstruction, economic development, social reintegration and reconciliation. It constitutes a great obstacle to the return of refugees and displaced persons, thus further hindering efforts at post-war social and political normalization.

The Croatian Government, with the help of the United Nations, has made progress in developing a national organization and overall system for mine clearance. In February 1998 the law to establish the Mine Action Centre was adopted. Its task is daunting. The more than a million mines spread over 60,000 square kilometres could take 15 years or more to clear. Although we do not underestimate the results achieved to date, we know that they represent a drop in the ocean of pressing need. These needs can be fully addressed only if the international community upholds its commitment and determination to assist technologically and financially the most affected countries in their national efforts while at the same time continuing activities to eliminate existing stockpiles.

As an illustration, let me point out that my Government has funded over 90 per cent of mine-clearance operations in Croatia. It is an immense burden for a country which has been suffering from the consequences of destruction caused by war and which has to cope simultaneously with the problems of an economy in transition. Since 1996 little international funding has been provided to assist Croatia. We therefore highly appreciate the donations made by Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom, as well as by the European Commission and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Demining. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Secretariat and member countries that have made United Nations technical assistance to Croatia possible.

It is in this context that Croatia associates itself with the Ottawa Convention. It participated in the Ottawa process from the beginning and was among the first 40 countries to ratify the Convention. We highly appreciate the special role that the Government of Canada, as well as the Governments of Norway and Austria, played in the Ottawa process. Croatia is looking forward to the first meeting of States parties and it welcomes the offer of the Government of Mozambique to host the Conference in Maputo. We also hope that complementary efforts will be pursued in the Conference on Disarmament which may eventually lead to a total ban on landmines.

Having said all that, I wish to put on record Croatia's strong support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 as proposed by Canada. It goes without saying that we also welcome and support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Amended Protocol II, introduced yesterday in the Committee by the representative of Sweden.

As I said, Croatia is looking forward to the Maputo meeting. We attach great importance to a well-coordinated and effective preparatory process. We believe that it is important to sustain the unique synergy among Governments, international organizations and institutions and civil society during that process. It is this particular synergy that made the Ottawa process such a gratifying precedent in multilateral negotiations. The full impact of the Convention will depend on its successful

implementation. Eliminating anti-personnel landmines and assisting victims will require the long-term mobilization of much greater resources than have thus far been made available, as well as a more effective coordination of international efforts.

Croatia shares the concern expressed by the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross about

> "the number of efforts at international coordination and data collection which have not yet resulted in new activities in mine-affected communities."

We look to the follow-up of the Ottawa process as the catalyst for genuinely advancing mine action throughout the world. From our own experience we can say that more forceful action is required at national, regional and global levels. This has to be coupled with the necessary funds to finance commercial demining, as well as assistance in specialized equipment, training and in-kind personnel support to the most affected countries. Assistance is also needed in enhancing the effectiveness of national capacities, including determining the appropriate role of the military in humanitarian demining.

The implementation of the Convention will be a particularly difficult challenge for mine-affected countries. They will have to implement the obligations of the Convention, which are many, complex and costly, and at the same time intensify mine clearance activities and victim rehabilitation. Croatia believes that this issue deserves special consideration in the preparations for the follow-up programme for the Ottawa Convention.

Croatia is ready to work hard with all countries to support the Ottawa Convention in its next phase. The Convention is indeed the framework for a comprehensive solution to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. We have to use it to the fullest extent possible. The draft resolution on mine action currently under consideration in the General Assembly could provide useful input into our deliberations on the preparatory process. The role of the United Nations in increasing international mine-related activities and cooperation will be very important. We are looking forward to the contribution of the United Nations Secretariat in that respect.

Finally, my Government would like to express its deepest regret to the United Nations Secretariat, the Government of South Africa and the family of the South African national who was tragically killed by a landmine last week while working on landmine clearance in Croatia. This latest tragedy is a sad reminder of the horrible danger of landmines and of the urgency of our deliberations.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Since this is my first intervention in the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the chairmanship, and commend you for the way you are running the Committee, and for your self-determination and discipline both in keeping the audience quiet and in guarding your figure as you go through the immense dining process that every Chairman has to endure.

I take the floor today to comment on the draft resolution (A/C.1/53/L.48) entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". The United States delegation listened carefully to the discussion of the draft resolution on Tuesday, and I would like to comment both on that discussion and on the text itself.

In listening to the comments of its sponsors, we noted that while the draft resolution is one of the longest on this year's agenda, its supporters referred almost entirely to its first operative paragraph. They clearly consider that the heart of the draft resolution is its call in paragraph 1 for the nuclear-weapon States to "demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons".

I would have thought it unnecessary to reiterate once again the commitment of the United States to nuclear disarmament, a commitment we undertook when we adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but let me recall the steps we have taken, and are taking, in fulfilment of our article VI commitment. Some of the most important ones are described in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49, on bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament.

To review those specifics, let me point out that since the height of the cold war the United States has almost completely eliminated its non-strategic nuclear weapons, going from 15 systems in 1971 to two systems today. We have eliminated more than 10,000 nuclear warheads from our military arsenal, along with more than 1,700 missile launchers and bombers under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and START I. We have not conducted a nuclear-weapon test explosion since 1992. We ceased the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons many years ago and have removed more than 200 tons of fissile material from our military stockpile. Once we have concluded the next step in strategic arms control, as agreed

by the United States and Russia, we will have made reductions of 80 per cent from cold war peaks of deployed weapons. If this does not demonstrate a commitment to nuclear disarmament in deeds, not words, I do not know what does.

The logic of this paragraph also puzzles the United States. If the commitments we have already undertaken are sufficient, the world will gain nothing from their repetition. Alternatively, if the sponsors of the draft resolution do not consider these commitments trustworthy, why should we think they would find another one more reliable?

As I have noted, the sponsors of the draft resolution stress operative paragraph 1, but the United States takes the entire draft resolution seriously and urges the Committee to consider all its provisions carefully. We have held our counsel while we waited to see what would emerge from the deliberations the eight held with other members of this body. But now that we see a more developed text we have decided to make our views known. The United States could support some of the ideas it expresses but finds many more fundamentally misconceived or flawed in practice.

Let me elaborate: we reject the alarmist tone expressed in the first several preambular paragraphs. As Under-Secretary of State Holum said to the Committee a few weeks ago, the United States identifies with the yearning for more progress and the disappointment that the progress can be difficult and slow. This does not cause us alarm, however, but rather gives us the determination to work harder at the task of making more progress. What is alarming — but paradoxically not addressed explicitly in the draft resolution — is nuclear testing first by India and subsequently by Pakistan.

We have a similar reaction to the fourth preambular paragraph. The United States has had a long history of successfully controlling nuclear weapons and cannot accept the assertion that their mere existence leads to their use. For more than 50 years there have, of course, been no instances in which nuclear weapons have been used.

I turn now to the operative sections of the draft resolution. It makes some useful points on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and related issues, and we appreciate the revision of the paragraphs on cut-off to conform with the decision to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. On the other hand, we join others in pointing out that the call for the three non-member States of the NPT to adhere to that agreement makes no mention at all of the recent tests by two of the States concerned.

I have already discussed operative paragraph 1. Let me repeat: the United States has made a commitment to nuclear disarmament. If that is not sufficient, we fail to see what a repetition would add.

The draft resolution calls twice for the "seamless integration" of five-Power negotiations into the current bilateral process. That sounds good, but what does it really mean? Have the sponsors considered the alternatives? Are we sure a five-Power process would be the most effective, or might there be a parallel process or processes? The United States does not have an answer to these questions now, and neither, we suspect, does anyone else; nor will they until the process has moved further along.

In one of the few concrete proposals the draft resolution contains, it calls on the nuclear-weapon States to de-alert those weapons. The United States has carefully considered this issue and has agreed with Russia on pre-launch notification of strategic launch vehicles and space launches. However, we believe the wholesale adoption of de-alerting measures leads to instability. Because such measures are unverifiable, a situation could arise, similar to that of August 1914 and the rush to mobilization, in which the potential that one country might quickly return to alert status could start a dangerous rush by all to do so, leading to greater instability.

We have instead targeted our efforts at improving command and control systems, a more valuable approach than wholesale de-alerting. The United States finds the call for the International Atomic Energy Agency to explore verification of a nuclear-free world premature and inappropriate. My Government has always considered verification to be a national responsibility and will certainly not abdicate that responsibility when we are dealing with the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We suspect other States will not accept that idea either.

The calls for the Conference on Disarmament to create an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and for the convening of a nuclear disarmament conference, like much of this draft resolution, substitute more talk for concrete action. The United States has consistently described the problems with this proposal, especially the negative effect it could have on real nuclear disarmament reductions and talks with the Russian Federation. We believe no purpose would be served by running the serious risk of slowing or even stopping this proven and productive disarmament

process. That position will not change. In any case, we are already fully engaged in nuclear disarmament discussions in multilateral forums. We discuss nuclear disarmament here, in the Disarmament Commission, in plenary sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, in the NPT enhanced review process and potentially in a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should the international community agree to hold one.

Finally, the United States considers the affirmation in paragraph 19 of the draft resolution that a nuclear-free world will require "a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument" completely premature.

The United States believes it is more important to concentrate on the practical measures needed before we reach that point rather than consider now the legal form of an agreement.

I conclude with some general comments. Although frustrated by the pace of progress on nuclear disarmament, we, and we expect many others, do not see the need to replace the existing agenda with a new one. We all know what has to be done to move us farther along the path of nuclear disarmament. These actions include the continuation of the destruction of strategic offensive weapons as provided for under START I; the completion of ratification of the START II agreements and the beginning of START III negotiations; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the start of serious good-faith negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; and the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

That is an ambitious agenda, but not an unrealizable one. For us, arms control is an essential part of our national security policy, along with other aspects such as our commitment to collective self-defence and our system of security alliances. For us this is a seamless web. All the elements support each other. What we say here, we say elsewhere. When it comes to our national security we can never and will never put five bob each way.

Some seem to consider that this agenda is already accomplished. We do not. It includes tasks for the United States and Russia, for the other nuclear-weapon States, for NPT parties, for those countries that have not signed the NPT and for the international community as a whole. If we could achieve it we would have made a decisive step in the direction the eight nations call for.

But what does this draft resolution include that will advance us in that direction? For the most part it is an expression of concern that "something must be done". But apart from actions already under way, and the call for an international conference on nuclear disarmament, what does it contain? What will another international disarmament conference accomplish? It could well distract attention from the NPT review process and other established forums for negotiation and discussion of disarmament issues while giving non-parties to the NPT another excuse for their failure to adhere to the Treaty. The United States urges the sponsors, and others inclined to support the eight-nation initiative, to reconsider their approach, which offers little beyond the exhortation to do something. We can suggest no panaceas or easy ways forward. The progress of nuclear disarmament is deliberate and painstaking. It takes advantage of opportunities for progress when they arise. In our view, we do not need a new agenda, but a rededication to the agenda I have already outlined. It is a challenging agenda, but an achievable one if we have the collective will to pursue it. It may not be a new agenda, but it is a realistic one.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34, entitled "Regional disarmament", on behalf of the delegations of Armenia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, the Niger, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and my own delegation.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 is very similar to the resolution which was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus last year as resolution 52/38 P.

In the post-cold-war period, conflicts and tensions escalated and proliferated in various parts of the world. The brutal discipline of bipolar confrontation has broken down. Many States, especially the smaller States, have a greater sense of insecurity. This insecurity and rising tensions are reflected in the increase in the acquisition, development, production and use of armaments — mostly conventional arms, but also at times non-conventional capabilities.

The asymmetries in defence capabilities created by such situations lead to the dangers of aggression and the use of force. Conventional imbalances in regions of tension can lead to the search for non-conventional means of self-defence and deterrence. In this context, the relevance and importance of the regional approach to disarmament,

especially throughout the region of South Asia, as well as in certain other regions, are self-evident.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 reflects the virtual international consensus in support of regional measures for confidence-building, non-proliferation and disarmament at the regional and subregional levels, as well as essential complements to the global efforts to promote disarmament and international security. The international community has now fully accepted the proposition that arms control and disarmament measures at the global level must be complemented by measures at the regional level which specifically address the particular dynamics of specific regions. Both global and regional disarmament must therefore be pursued simultaneously since both are essential to create the conditions for general and complete disarmament.

The draft resolution in A/C.1/53/L.34 affirms these propositions regarding the importance of regional disarmament. It takes into account most of the guidelines for regional disarmament adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. It also underlines that regional disarmament measures, by enhancing the security of regional States and reducing the risk of regional conflicts, will contribute to international peace and security.

The draft resolution, while affirming that sustained efforts are required in the Conference on Disarmament and in the United Nations framework on the entire range of disarmament issues, calls on States to conclude agreements, wherever possible, for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. The draft resolution welcomes the initiatives that have been taken by some States for disarmament, non-proliferation and security at the regional and subregional levels and supports the efforts for confidence-building measures as well. Parenthetically, I would like to mention in this context that in the resumed Indo-Pakistani dialogue the first item on the agenda relates to peace and security.

It is self-evident that the relative importance of regional measures for disarmament will gain increasing importance as the international community moves to promote peace and security in various regions where conflicts and tensions prevail at present. This draft resolution seeks to affirm the world community's support for and priority attention to these endeavours. My delegation and the other sponsors are confident that the draft resolution on this subject will once again be adopted by consensus in the General Assembly.

While I have the floor I would like, on behalf of the Pakistan delegation, to offer some comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", which has just been introduced by the Ambassador of Japan.

We believe, as we did last year, that the title of the draft resolution on this subject belies its actual content. The draft resolution relates mostly to nuclear non-proliferation and not to nuclear disarmament. Certainly there is no provision stated anywhere in this draft resolution that would lead to the conclusion that there is a "view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons". Indeed, in our view the title of the draft resolution should perhaps read "Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons by certain nuclear-weapon States", because that would be precisely the import of this draft resolution if it were to be implemented.

The Pakistan delegation has informally provided to the Japanese delegation a list of amendments to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.42 that we intend to propose. The first of these amendments would seek to delete the reference to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) of 6 June 1998 contained in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. That Security Council resolution, as is well known, was adopted without my country's being fully consulted. It was adopted *ex parte* almost, in a most undemocratic manner, on a matter which relates to our vital national security concerns. As the Ambassador of the United States has just said, on matters of vital national security interests we, too, do not put "five bob each way" (*supra*). Therefore, we would oppose any draft resolution containing a reference to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). We urge the Japanese delegation not to become a party to this discriminatory process if it wishes to retain wide support for its draft resolution.

My delegation also suggests that the draft resolution should contain an expression of concern at the statements by some nuclear-weapon States that have the import of retaining nuclear weapons indefinitely. It should contain a call upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with a view to their total elimination. That is much more important than the emphasis put in the draft resolution on the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which the sponsors know is not likely to happen in the near future.

We also hope that a reference to the need for the early commencement of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament will be inserted in the draft resolution. That provision has wide and virtually universal support within this Committee. We are surprised that the delegation of Japan has failed to include that in a draft resolution which purports to seek nuclear disarmament and even the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would be prepared to enter into consultations with the Japanese delegation, but so far we have not received any response to our informal contacts. We will thus be obliged to table our draft amendments and to seek a vote on these at the appropriate time.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Belarus to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus): On behalf of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, Ambassador Martynov, who is unable to join us for this stage of the deliberations, and on behalf of the Bureau of the Commission, Algeria, Croatia, Ecuador, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Luxembourg, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda and Belarus, allow me to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1, on agenda item 73 (a), "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: report of the Disarmament Commission".

This draft resolution is the result of open-ended, informal consultations among members of the Disarmament Commission. It has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Disarmament Commission.

In its preambular part, with the reference to resolutions adopted by previous sessions of the General Assembly, the draft resolution underlines the role of the Disarmament Commission in examining and submitting recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and in the promotion of the implementation of the relevant decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session.

In its operative part the draft resolution suggests that the General Assembly takes note of the Disarmament Commission's report. It reaffirms the importance of enhancing interaction among the components of the multilateral disarmament machinery and emphasizes the role of the Disarmament Commission in promoting deliberations on the related subject matter and elaborating recommendations thereon.

As warranted by circumstances, certain appropriate changes have been introduced in the draft text to complement the traditional format of the draft resolution on the agenda item on the report of the Disarmament Commission. Allow me to point out several paragraphs which contain those changes, namely, operative paragraphs 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Special reference in the operative part of the draft resolution is made to the successful conclusion of the review of the Disarmament Commission's work in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997. As members know, last summer at the resumed session of the First Committee, the Commission introduced the consensus text containing the agreed set of measures on the streamlining of the work of the Disarmament Commission with a view to its reform. Members may recall in this respect the resultant General Assembly decision 52/492 adopted on 8 September 1998.

Of particular importance is the consensus reached by the Disarmament Commission at its 1998 substantive session to give focused consideration to a limited number of priority issues in the field of disarmament, bearing in mind the decision to move its agenda towards a two-item agenda approach as reflected in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution. Since these measures would be implemented as of the year 2000, the work of the Commission in this general direction will certainly continue.

Operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution recommends that the Disarmament Commission adopt the following items for consideration at its 1999 substantive session: the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N of 10 December 1996. The third item will be added to the agenda of the Disarmament Commission in 1999 with due regard to recommendations coming from the General Assembly at its current session.

In order to determine the subject matter of that third item, the Chairman of the Commission held a series of informal consultations with various members and, time permitting, intends to have one or two open-ended

consultations with the full membership of the Commission prior to the 1998 organizational session. At this stage I am happy to note that consultations on the issue have been very positive and cooperative in spirit. I am confident of the positive impact of the decisions to be taken on the issue by the General Assembly at its current session and of the consultations that have taken place for further efforts by the Disarmament Commission Chairman to harmonize the views of delegations. Building on that, the organizational meeting tentatively scheduled for 3 December 1998 will adopt, we hope by consensus, the third item.

As members are aware, during past years the Commission has always met for three weeks and one day. Because of the crowded schedule of disarmament events, certain problems arise for those delegations which participate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, the concerns of these delegations were repeatedly aired during our deliberations. Thus, operative paragraph 8 requests the Disarmament Commission to meet in 1999 for a period not exceeding three weeks.

The rest of the text of the draft resolution remains the same as in resolutions of previous years. I hope — and it is the intention of the Disarmament Commission Bureau — that, with the indicated slight revisions and additions, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1 will enjoy consensus adoption, as have similar resolutions in previous years.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): It is a healthy sign that the First Committee is able to engage in a debate on an issue that the majority of its members regard as an absolute priority. As a committed sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, I wish to comment on some of the observations that have been made this week.

First, I should say that we have listened carefully to the comments made by the Ambassador of Pakistan on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. The observation that the draft resolution has several omissions is of interest to us. Some of those omissions are addressed in other draft resolutions. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 is, we believe, very comprehensive as it stands. Some have criticized it for being far too long. This suggests to us that we may have got it right in terms of both scope and substance.

I also wish to comment on claims that the draft resolution undermines the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We find this assertion very puzzling and wonder whether we are all talking about the same draft resolution. In draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 there is a clear and unambiguous endorsement of the NPT and an equally clear endorsement of the importance we attach to the enhanced NPT review process now under way. The draft resolution also explicitly calls for non-parties to sign and ratify the NPT. By my count there are five other references to the NPT in the draft resolution text. I think it is clear to those who have studied the text of the draft resolution that it does not in any way undermine the NPT. On the contrary, it specifically underpins and endorses that Treaty.

Another claim levelled at the sponsors of the draft resolution is that it does not address nuclear testing. We have been told that it should condemn such tests. We find this assertion to be curious, coming from delegations that only a few weeks ago in Vienna felt obliged to abstain on a resolution deploring nuclear testing.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 is not confrontational, but it is not intended to be comfortable. The issues it addresses are not comfortable ones for any government. Nor does this initiative provide comfort for some at the expense of others. It does not presume in any way to undermine the hugely important START process. Indeed, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 welcomes the future promise that process holds.

We find it difficult to accept the argument that this is not an appropriate time to be looking ahead at the next steps in nuclear disarmament. When, may we ask, will the time ever be right? The issues we address are those that all committed parties to the NPT have an obligation to raise and the right to pursue. We do so because the people we are here to represent expect this Committee to demonstrate leadership in pursuing nuclear disarmament. The calls in the draft resolution are not novel, but like it or not, they are imperatives that will not go away. Above all, we see this as a "stand up and be counted" resolution.

Ms. Burgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): The statement I am going to deliver was in fact intended to respond to the Egyptian delegation's introduction of the draft resolution on outer space. The great variety of approaches in dealing with our subject matter makes dialogue a little more difficult, but nevertheless I wish to state my country's position on a matter that is really very important. At the outset of the session of the Conference on Disarmament in January 1998, I pointed out that my country attributed special importance to the fact that the Geneva forum deals with three subjects: the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, the banning of anti-personnel landmines and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

On 26 March 1998 the Conference decided to entrust a special coordinator with the task of exploring the possibility of creating an ad hoc committee in this regard. Nobody will be surprised in the circumstances that my delegation is coming back today to this item under agenda item 70. France's interest in this matter is not new. We presented specific proposals at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Some of them were subsequently retained. This interest then emerged on several occasions at the Conference on Disarmament, and guidelines for reflection were put forward, mainly in 1993. Very recently I have been able to note the renewed interest of many delegations in this subject, and recent developments in the international situation make us want to think about ways to avoid an aggressive — I repeat, aggressive — militarization of space, which could be a source of danger to the international community and the geostrategic balance.

Very recently, the North Korean launch on 31 August 1998, carried out without prior notification and seen initially as a missile test before being officially announced as a civilian satellite launching, showed the relevance of the proposal for a multilateral notification regime for rocket and missile launching, which France had presented in Geneva in March 1993. My delegation is well aware that this problem is vast and complex. There is no question of tackling the entire matter all at once. But it seems strange to me that the international community should disregard a problem that is so crucial and that it should not at least be able to initiate a long-term reflection on this matter. The matter is sufficiently topical and important to call for reflection on subjects that could meet with consensus and that we should define together.

That is why my delegation wishes to express its positive commitment to this issue of outer space by voting in favour of the present draft resolution rather than abstaining, as we did in the voting on the draft resolution submitted in 1997 by Sri Lanka, which was adopted as resolution 52/37.

Mr. Bjarme (Sweden): Regrettably, a distinct slowdown has taken place in the last few years as regards further concrete progress towards nuclear disarmament. The START process is partly stalled. Through their nuclear testing, India and Pakistan have gravely threatened the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. At the multilateral level, only recently, after two years of inaction with regard to substantive work, could the Conference on Disarmament arrive at a decision to commence negotiations on a fissile material treaty. The challenge remains to get these negotiations off to a speedy and smooth start in 1999.

As to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, its strengthened review process ran into considerable difficulties at this year's meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference in the year 2000. In our view, a new and forceful political impetus is now much needed to reinvigorate and reinforce the nuclear disarmament process. We believe it is of utmost importance that the international nuclear disarmament efforts be pursued expeditiously and with a strong sense of determination, and that the current threats to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime be strongly and resolutely dealt with.

These twin objectives are firmly embodied in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. Furthermore, the draft resolution sets out a clear and concrete approach for taking the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process forward. This approach is based on the pursuit in parallel of a series of concrete and mutually reinforcing measures to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States themselves and by the nuclear-weapon States together with the non-nuclear-weapon States. Together these measures provide a road map for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It must also be underlined that our draft resolution in no way is intended to undermine or deviate from the vital work carried out within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That Treaty constitutes the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for international nuclear disarmament efforts.

What we do in the draft resolution, however, is to call for expeditious implementation of that Treaty's article VI. A strong and broad backing of the draft resolution across all the groupings would greatly assist in reinjecting a new sense of urgency into the efforts of the international community to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I must admit that one of the characteristics of these types of debates, when one as a representative needs to respond to a statement such as the one we have just heard from the American Ambassador, is that unlike being able to read through a carefully crafted written statement, one can speak from the heart, openly stating one's case.

I regret that, after having initiated the debate, the Ambassador of the United States has been unable to remain

behind to participate, but I am sure that he is ably represented.

The United States has raised issues which we believed had successfully been addressed at our last meeting, when the draft resolution was addressed in this thematic debate and I referred to the South Asian tests, the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and so on. But the United States also raises important new issues which need to be addressed and answered. The approach that I will take is to work my way through the statement made by the Ambassador of the United States and the particular points that I highlighted while he made it.

One point made very early in his statement, which I must say sent a certain amount of happiness through my heart, was when he said, "I would have thought it unnecessary to reiterate once again the commitment of the United States to nuclear disarmament". (*supra*) It seemed to me that in making that statement the Ambassador of the United States indicated that he in fact has no substantive difficulty with operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, which he correctly identifies as the heart of the draft resolution that has been put forward on the new agenda. He went on to say in a later part of his speech,

> "The logic of this paragraph also puzzles the United States. If the commitments we have already undertaken are sufficient, the world will gain nothing from their repetition." (*ibid.*)

Therefore, if an unequivocal commitment has been made by the United States to the speedy achievement of nuclear disarmament, then it would seem to me, from the words the United States Ambassador used, that fundamentally and substantively the United States has no difficulty with operative paragraph 1. I should emphasize that for that I am pleased and look forward to the United States being able to support that paragraph. It is an important paragraph. It calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and without delay to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the elimination of these weapons, thereby fulfilling their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

I was certainly pleased that the United States, as we heard earlier when we last undertook the debate, did not take, and clearly did not see, this language as an attempt in any way to remove the importance of the obligations that the United States has undertaken in article VI, and that in fact the feeling is that they have already made the commitment that is being asked for.

The next point that the United States Ambassador made, which I thought was important to pick up on, was that "the United States takes the entire draft resolution seriously and urges the Committee to consider all its provisions carefully." (*ibid.*) I join the United States Ambassador in making that appeal to all delegations represented in this room. He is quite correct. This draft resolution is not merely about operative paragraph 1. It is about all its paragraphs. It is about the need for a new agenda.

The United States Ambassador then went on to address some specific aspects of concern that the United States has with the text of the draft resolution. The first point that he made was that the introductory preambular paragraphs were alarmist in tone. Let me be frank and honest before the Committee. There is something I do every time I come to the United Nations to attend a disarmament meeting: I walk past the exhibit that appears on the ground floor of this building. I would encourage all representatives in this Committee room to walk past that exhibit. It is an exhibit of the outcome and the residue left after nuclear weapons were used in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. I walk past that exhibit to remind me of why I am here. Once one walks past that exhibit and sees the effects of these weapons, I do not think that one could be called alarmist because of the language included in the text of this draft resolution.

I do not make the point to try to score debating points, because this is not a debating point. I see the point that the United States is making on this particular issue, but I urge the United States to try to see the issue from the perspective from which we, the delegations that have put forward this draft resolution, see it. That is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in our near environs, not very far away.

The next point taken up by the Ambassador of the United States is the argument that the draft resolution makes no mention of the recent tests by the two States concerned. Again, the draft resolution is not about nuclear testing. There is another draft resolution about nuclear testing, and we will all have the opportunity to demonstrate there our positions on the nuclear testing that has taken place, as South Africa was able to do in all the forums in

which it participates, both nationally and in conjunction with others.

This draft resolution deals with the consequences of nuclear weapons. It attempts to set a new agenda, and I continue to believe — and I made this point the last time we had the debate — that it very forcefully takes up the point on the issue of the States that were responsible for the conduct of these tests. It does so in operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 10. For ease of reference — and I am sure, Mr. Chairman, you will give me a little leeway — I will yet again read out those paragraphs to refresh the memory, because it is some of the strongest language that I have seen on this issue. Paragraph 7

> "*Calls upon* those three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of all nuclear weapons development or deployment and to refrain from any actions which could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation".

In the statement that the Ambassador of the United States made he also referred to the NPT, but in this context I will also raise the NPT, because paragraph 8 of the draft resolution

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to adhere" —

not just to adhere to the NPT, but to adhere —

> "unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to take all the necessary measures which flow from adherence to this instrument".

It then also takes the issue of testing head on. Paragraph 10

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify, unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending the Treaty's entry into force, to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests".

It is my contention that one could not be clearer on this particular issue. The next point raised by the Ambassador of the United States, which I must say he raised in an interesting way — and it would be worthwhile to have debate and discussion on this matter, because I think we could both gain something from such a debate — was that de-alerting measures lead to instability. That is totally different from my concept of de-alerting measures.

The United Kingdom, I think, stated that it had taken steps like this, not to create instability we presume, but to slow down the reaction time that could lead to a nuclear-weapons exchange. That is the intention of de-alerting. It is not to create instability but to create stability through delay; in the time it would take for a decision to start a nuclear war there would be a delay as to when those weapons would be launched. Hopefully, in the time provided and the way these weapons are de-alerted, sense and good reason will prevail.

The next point raised by the Ambassador of the United States was when he said, "My Government has always considered verification to be a national responsibility". (*supra*) I should also like genuinely to engage in a debate with the Ambassador of the United States on this issue. They really do not understand — and I am being very frank — because I thought that at the heart of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and of the negotiations we are currently conducting on the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, in which I myself have played some small role, and on the whole safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), what we are establishing are mechanisms to verify, in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention, compliance with that Convention, which bans those weapons; while in the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, the South African delegation is working very closely with the United States delegation to verify that those weapons are also banned; and in the case of the safeguards system, because the reference was here made directly to the IAEA, to ensure that countries meet the safeguards agreements which they have undertaken and their obligations as non-nuclear-weapon States under the NPT.

I have never really seen verification as being purely a national responsibility. I can see the national responsibility element to verification, but I could never see it as being purely a national responsibility. That is a very distinct point, and we would seek an exchange on it.

On the issue of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament — which are not quite the words the draft resolution uses, but we will provide leeway on that because the wording the draft resolution uses in this particular

instance, an ad hoc committee "to deal with nuclear disarmament", is a little more ambiguous than the way the Ambassador of the United States puts it — those of us who participate in the Conference on Disarmament are all fully aware of the numerous proposals that have been made from across political groupings to have the nuclear disarmament issue addressed. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to go through one or two of those proposals.

First is the one by South Africa. Although I list it first I am sure you will not mind my prejudice. The idea is to deliberate within the Conference on Disarmament on the issue of nuclear disarmament and identify the steps that would be needed to lead us to this point. There is a concept that preceded this because of the frustration of nobody knowing how we were going to get to nuclear disarmament, the elimination of nuclear weapons, to which we have all, except for a few countries in this room, committed ourselves under the NPT. That is one proposal.

There is a proposal by your delegation, Mr. Chairman. The delegation of Belgium made a proposal in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue. There are proposals by the delegations of Japan, Canada and countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is not just a desire of the small group of countries that have come forward with this rather strange draft resolution — or so it would appear in terms of the reactions to it — but seems to me to have a much broader base of support. There is a desire by the international community, which comes from across political groupings, to have this issue dealt with in the Conference on Disarmament. That is why in the text of the draft resolution we do not refer to an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, which is code language for all of us who participate in the Conference on Disarmament, but use the words "to deal with nuclear disarmament".

The next point I would like to raise is where the Ambassador of the United States said that he considered "the affirmation that a nuclear-free world will require 'a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument' completely premature." (*supra*)

I should like to read the full quotation because that is only part of the quotation, and I think it puts a spin on the idea contained in the draft resolution that is not there. Paragraph 19, in full,

> "*Affirms* that a nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments".

To me that seems clear. In terms of trying to ban chemical weapons we ended up with an instrument, and with the Biological Weapons Convention we ended up with an instrument. There will have to be at some point in time — and we do not raise the issue of time in the draft resolution — an instrument or instruments that will legally commit States not to aspire to nuclear weapons and not to attempt to acquire them. If that provision were not in the draft resolution, the weapon States as they currently exist today would be totally justified in having reservations about destroying their own weapons. While the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation remains and while the threat of a nuclear outbreak remains, and while there is not a verification system or a legal network to prevent it, we can never reach the point of nuclear disarmament.

Not only is the text of our draft resolution based on logic, but we have made a determined effort not to prejudge the issue. It says that there can be a holistic agreement or a set of instruments. In other words, it addresses both sides of the debate on this particular issue — the step-by-step approach or any other approach that one might wish to bring forward.

The Ambassador of the United States then goes through the list of what he regards as being the agenda. The problem I have with the listing made by the Ambassador of United States is that I do not disagree with it. I actually agree with and support the listing. But that is not what this draft resolution is about. In the draft resolution we acknowledge these steps. In the eleventh preambular paragraph we welcome "the achievements to date and the future promise" — what good words — "of the START process". In the twelfth preambular paragraph we say, "and in this connection noting certain recent unilateral and other steps" taken. There is nothing in opposition, but we are looking further down the track at what steps would be needed to take us to zero, that zero to which we have all committed ourselves.

I now come to my last point. In the last paragraph of his speech, the Ambassador of the United States said, "It could well distract attention from the NPT review process and other established forums for negotiation and discussion of disarmament issues". (*supra*) This concern is raised with the sponsors of the draft resolution. Because this is not what we intended to do, and to make it clear that it was not our intention to do this, we inserted paragraph 15, which underlines the point and states,

"*Recalls* the importance of the Decisions and Resolutions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and *underlines* the importance of implementing fully the 'Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty' Decision".

So the draft resolution in fact moves in support of the NPT review process and in no way tries to undermine it. As I said the other day, I would be far outside my instructions and would be unhappily looking to retirement in the very near future if I were to do anything that would undermine that review process. I have really tried to take a positive attitude to the speech of the Ambassador of the United States. We are deeply disappointed that he is unable to acknowledge the draft resolution for what it truly is: a genuine, reasonable and moderate attempt to seek the middle ground for achieving the self-undertaken obligation under the NPT to eliminate nuclear weapons. What makes this even worse is that we are convinced that those delegations that have spoken on this issue in this Committee realize the moderation of this draft resolution and the agenda that it sets forth. That is why they are on the defensive.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should now like to say a few words about the current situation. Out of 17 draft resolutions in cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, 10 have been introduced. Out of four draft resolutions on weapons of mass destruction, three have been introduced. On outer space there was only one draft resolution, which has been introduced. On conventional weapons, two draft resolutions out of five have been introduced. On regional development, one out of three has been introduced. On confidence-building measures, none of the four draft resolutions has been introduced. On disarmament machinery, three out of eight have been introduced. On other disarmament measures, two out of four draft resolutions have been introduced. The draft resolutions on related measures and international security were not introduced.

Thus, out of 49 draft resolutions and one amendment, 22 have been introduced. There are still three meetings left: two tomorrow, Friday, and one on Monday. I would encourage delegations to think about introducing the draft resolutions as quickly as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.